CD/2033

Conference on Disarmament

17 August 2015

Original: English

Final report on the work of the Informal Working Group re-established pursuant to rule 23 of its rules of procedure, with a mandate to produce a programme of work robust in substance and progressive over time in implementation

(Adopted at the 1363rd plenary meeting on 17 August 2015)

1. It is my honour as the co-Chair of the Informal Working Group to the Conference on Disarmament, established under the decision CD/2022 of 10th June 2015, to submit my report to the President of the Conference on the work of the Informal Working Group and on the related informal consultations held in 2015. This Informal Working Group followed on from the work previously undertaken by Mr. Luis Gallegos, Ambassador of Ecuador and Mr. Peter Woolcott, Ambassador of Australia in the Informal Working Group established in 2014 and 2013 pursuant to CD/1974 and CD/1956/Rev.1 respectively.

2. The mandate of the Informal Working Group was to produce a programme of work, robust in substance and progressive over time in implementation, at the earliest possible date in its 2015 session.

3. I, pursuant to para 5 of CD/2022, and upon the agreement of the respective Presidents of the Conference, Mr. Maung Wai, Ambassador of Myanmar and Mr. Henk Cor van der Kwast, Ambassador of the Netherlands have conducted consultations on a programme of work, exploring possibilities for a negotiation mandate for any of the agenda items. To this end, I have convened two open meetings which were attended by the members and observers States of the Conference. These meetings were held on the 19th June 2015 and on the 3rd July 2015. Delegations participated actively in these deliberations, which provided a rich exchange of views and proposals that highlighted the importance of the Conference on Disarmament as a single multilateral negotiating forum.

4. Concurrently, while continuing to seek a path towards renewed negotiations, the Conference on Disarmament decided in June 2015 under the Moroccan Presidency to convene informal open-ended meetings for holding structured and substantive discussions on its agenda items (a schedule of activities). The subsequent discussions in the 2015 session of the Conference in relation to the schedule of activities, carried out under a relatively short period of time, provided a valuable opportunity for delegations to exchange views, to identify issues of commonality and points of divergence, and to lay the groundwork to facilitate possible future negotiations following the adoption of a programme of work. These discussions provided a useful and constructive way to explore in depth the issues under each agen a item and provided helpful indications as how to proceed forward. However, these discussions did not lead to a consensus which would have enabled the Conference to adopt a programme of work.

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5. My consultations, which I carried out in my capacity as the co-Chair, started immediately after the adoption of the decision CD/2022 on the 10th June 2015 and finished for practical reasons before the beginning of August 2015. I recognized the challenges, including the very limited period of time, that I would face while undertaking my consultations. After several bilateral, regional and Informal Working Group consultations, it became clear that at this stage a consensus could not be reached to take forward a programme of work in relation to any of the four core issues, or any other agenda item of the Conference on Disarmament. However, during my consultations several forward looking, and potentially helpful, ideas and proposals were presented by delegations and some of them were discussed at the meetings of the Informal Working Group. I am most grateful for delegations for their activity and genuine attempts to seek means to overcome the impasse.

6. My conclusions on the basis of the consultations include, but are not limited to, the following points:

(a) The focus on the core agenda items should remain as a priority in order to find a consensus formula for a comprehensive and balanced programme of work;

(b) Should a consensus emerge on any possible new items, the current agenda of the Conference on Disarmament is flexible enough for the Conference to deal with any such item;

(c) The primary objective of Conference is to negotiate legally binding instruments, which should remain as the primary objective. Also, politically binding agreements, as well as other proposals, could be considered possibly as a means of a stepping stone towards legally binding agreements;

(d) The Conference on Disarmament, if agreed, could continue to consider holding structured in-depth deliberations, with greater specificity and allocation of time on agenda items, including through the participation of scientific and technical experts on specific topics, to enhance understanding and common ground beneficial to future negotiations that the Conference could undertake; and

(e) It would seem to be helpful to continue to explore further on how to take forward the above-mentioned and other ideas in a structured and inclusive manner.

(Signed) Päivi Kairamo
Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Finland